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REID

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE, WRITINGS, AND CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

^K
SIR JOHN HILL, M.D.

ACAD. REG. SCIENT. BURD. ETC. SOC.

EDINBURGH:

SOLD BY GEORGE REID PRINTER. AND,
BY THE BOOKSELLERS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

MDCCLXXIX.

[Price SIXPENCE.]



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THE LIFE OF
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SIR JOHN HILL.

NO Character, however inoffensive, or even meritorious, ever existed, against whom, at one time or other, envy or malice have not shot their envenomed darts. Private persons, indeed, are not so subject to these attacks as those who range the wide fields of Science; and accordingly we find, while the former are only liable to the secret stabs of a few, the latter are exposed to a whole army of writers of different denominations, who are averse to think, that one man, of real genius, should possess a greater degree of merit in the scientific circle, than all of them together had any just title to claim.

This was peculiarly the case with Sir JOHN HILL. His genius was extensive, and he gave it full scope. No subject, however abstruse, was beyond the depth of his judgment; none so light, if he thought it could serve mankind, which he held unworthy of notice. *Botany*, though his principal study, was not his only one. He studied *Nature* also; and perhaps no man ever exhibited more convincing proofs of a thorough knowledge of the subject.

His numerous works, upon a vast variety of subjects, while they procured him the patronage of the best and greatest Personages in this, as well as other countries, at the same time raised up a host of foes, enemies to him as well as to knowledge. These did not fail to make use of every engine malevolence could invent, to depreciate the character and the works of a man, whom they saw, with regret, every way so far their superior. But they were disappointed. The Philosopher calmly pursued his researches, despising such cavillers; and when he found any thing worthy the attention of the public, laid it be-

fore them, dressed only with truth and simplicity. To his indefatigable labours the world are indebted, besides many other very valuable discoveries, for a Vegetable System, of which they formerly had, at best, but very imperfect ideas.

Sir JOHN was originally bred an Apothecary, and, during his apprenticeship, regularly attended the Botanical lectures given periodically under the patronage of the Apothecary Company of London. Being possessed of quick natural parts, he soon made himself acquainted with the theoretical, as well as practical parts of Botany, his favourite study, and in the prosecution of which he travelled over several parts of the kingdom, to collect certain of the most rare and uncommon plants, of which, in a short time after, he published an account.

His great natural and acquired knowledge, at a very early period of life, introduced him to the acquaintance and friendship of several Noblemen of approved taste and abilities in his native country. To the same causes must be attributed, the particular attention which was paid to him by people in different parts of Europe, the most distinguished for literary merit; and this encouraged him to proceed with assiduity in those various pursuits which he was calculated, by his learning and perseverance, in so eminent a degree to prosecute with advantage.

To descant upon each of his performances would be a work of that time and labour, which none, but such a man as himself, could either have the ability or the industry to execute. In the present essay, little more is meant than to give a sort of Catalogue of his various productions, without any comment, except upon some very particular occasions; and this alone might be sufficient to hand down his name, with respect and veneration, to every lover of science in the present and future ages.

In this business, it is not proposed to class the several Books according to the periods of their different publications; but under the titles *Folio*, *Quarto*, *Octavo*, &c. *in-fra*, without any regard to dates.

FOLIO.

OF SIR JOHN HILL.

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F O L I O.

Under this title Sir JOHN HILL published,

A COMPLETE NATURAL HISTORY, in three Volumes: The first Volume containing the History of Animals; the second that of Plants; and the third of Fossils.

2. **Construction of Timber** from its early growth, explained by the Microscope, and proved from experiments, in a great variety of kinds; in five Books. On the parts of trees; their vessels; and their encrease by growth: And on the different dispositions of those parts in various kinds; and the particularities in their vessels. With figures of their various appearances; of the Instrument for cutting them, and of the Microscope through which they were viewed.

N. B. This Book is likewise published in Octavo.

3. **The Naval History of Great Britain**, from the earliest periods of which there are accounts in History, to the conclusion of the year 1756. Compiled from the Papers of the late Hon. Capt. George Berkley, Commander of his Majesty's ship *Windfor*. Dedicated to his Royal Highness Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of York. This Naval History, according to the plan which the learned Author laid down, includes a succession of about 2000 years. As the Samnite war has been made a point of time from which to date the History of the Romans, our Author, with equal reason, has established the first invasion of this country by that people under Julius Cæsar, as an æra whence to date the Naval History of Great Britain; but, as there is something to be found in the scattered fragments of early History, long preceding this, greatly to our honour, this he has not passed over slightly. The first landing of Cæsar having happened more than 1800 years ago, points out the first, or great division of the work, into eighteen Books, distinguished by so many Centuries. In the course of the work is given at large, a general and particular account of the British forces at sea, beginning at an earlier period than any others; and occasion is taken to introduce, in a subordinate manner, the Naval transactions of all

other nations wherewith Britain has had concern. This History may be said, with great truth, to be full without being tedious, and short without being obscure.

4. Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary, in two Volumes. This laborious work our Author executed in conjunction with George Lewis Scott, Esq;

5. A Complete Body of Husbandry.

N. B. This Work was also published in four Volumes Octavo.

6. Eden; or a Complete Body of Gardening. Containing plain and familiar directions for raising the several useful products of a Garden, Fruits, Roots, and Herbage; from the practice of the most successful Gardeners, and the result of a long Experience. Together with the Culture of all kinds of Flowers, according to the methods of the English, French, and Dutch Florists; and the knowledge of curious Plants, after the System of Linnæus. With Figures and Descriptions of the Flowers and Plants proper for a Garden. Including the Care and Culture of the Pleasure Garden. The Business of the Seminary for every Week in the Year. Catalogues and accurate Descriptions of the Fruits as they come into season; and new and practical Directions for the management of Fruit Trees. With the best methods of Culture for the several articles of the Kitchen Garden; and the complete Management of the Ground for raising them, in the Natural and Artificial Manner.

This valuable and extensive Work is dedicated to that able judge and great encourager of every useful science, the Right Hon. the Earl of Bute.

7. Exotic Botany, illustrated in thirty-five Figures of elegant Chinese and American Shrubs and Plants, explaining the Sexual System, and tending to give some new Lights into the Vegetable Philosophy.

This curious and highly finished work is dedicated to his Grace the Duke of Northumberland; to whom our Author expresses the greatest obligations, as several of the Plants, which will be found its best recommendation, he says, were first raised in this unfavourable climate, under his Grace's immediate care: They were the produce of his own stoves and gardens.

8. Hortus

8. Hortus Kewensis. Containing an account of twenty-five curious Plants growing in the Gardens of her late Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales.

9. A Decade of curious Trees and Plants, chiefly from the East Indies, with their Figures on Imperial paper.

10. The British Herbal; with Figures of all the Herbs, on seventy-five Copper Plates.

11. A History of the Aggregates, or Cluster-headed Plants, &c. and a figure of every Plant, drawn and engraved from nature, being an abstract from the Vegetable System, and published separately.

12. Orchides. Likewise an abstract from the Vegetable System, and published in the same manner with the preceding.

13. The Vegetable System; or, The Internal Structure of Plants; their parts, and nourishment, explained; their classes, orders, genera, and species, ascertained and described, in a manner altogether new. Comprehending an artificial Index, and a natural System. With figures of all the plants designed and engraved by the Author. The whole from nature only.

This work consists of no less than Twenty-six Volumes. Contains 1600 Copper Plates, representing about twenty-six thousand different figures of Plants, &c. and is perhaps the greatest undertaking that ever appeared in this, or in any other country, as the labours of one man. The first volume of it was published in the year 1759, and was dedicated to his present Majesty, then Prince of Wales. The publication of the other volumes were continued half-yearly thereafter, with few interruptions; and, in May 1774, the Author had finished his manuscript and drawings of the 26th volume.

To expatiate upon the merits of this work would be an idle task indeed. They have been amply acknowledged by every man of genius who has seen it; and its circulation has not been confined to Britain alone.

QUARTO.

QUARTO.

Under this title fall to be classed the following :

1. A HISTORY OF THE MATERIA MEDICA. Containing Descriptions of all the Substances used in Medicine; their origin, their characters when in perfection, the signs of their decay, their chymical analysis, and an account of their virtues, and of the several preparations from them. Dedicated, by permission, to that celebrated physician Dr Mead.

In this extensive work our Author has treated largely of the Fossile, the Vegetable, and the Animal Kingdoms, and given a general History of them. As the number of bodies comprehended under these general distinctions, is considerably great, he has aranged those belonging to each into several classes, under such denominations as are familiar and obvious, and naturally point out the place where the subject may be expected to be found.

2. The Vegetable System, in eight Volumes.

3. The History of Botany, containing a series of experiments and observations, explanatory of the internal structure and life of plants, their growth and propagation,—with plates.

4. A Decade of curious and uncommon Insects, discovered by the Lucernal Microscope, some of them not formerly described; with their figures in colours.

5. Urania, or a view of the Starry Heavens.

6. Thoughts concerning God and Nature, in answer to a book written by the late Henry St John Viscount Bolingbroke.

This learned and laborious work is dedicated to his late Majesty, George II. wherein our Author says, that nothing but a desire to support, on the authority of ancient and modern literature, the certainty of a God, and the obligations of Religion, could have induced him to request his Majesty's protection, as Patron of Learning, and DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

It is divided into six books, and each book subdivided into chapters; with an appendix.

Book 1st treats of the Doctrines of Moses, and what are received as the earliest opinions after his. Book 2^d, Of the

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the Doctrines of the Greek Philosophers. Book 3^d, Of the Origin and Progress of Atheism. Book 4th, Of the opinions of those who have opposed the several systems of Atheism. Book 5th, Observations on God and the Creation. Book 6th, Of the Doctrines contained in the posthumous pieces of Lord Bolingbroke. The Appendix treats of the several systems of what is called Deism, and of the divine origin of Christianity.

While our author endeavours to establish the divine originality of the writings of Moses; the authenticity of the Scriptures; the perfections and attributes of the Deity, and the necessity of the Christian revelation, he uses such irrefragable arguments, and soundness of reasoning, that scepticism itself, were it capable of conviction, would become a convert to his principles. A more ample refutation of the notions of Spinoza, Hobbes, and other Atheistical writers, and the Deistical principles of Lord Bolingbroke, is perhaps no where to be found. In sentiments he is just and rational; in language plain, easy, and expressive; in quotations fair and open; and in deductions honest and persuasive.

Nothing but a high esteem and veneration for the Christian Religion, could have induced this great man to step forth and take up the pen in its vindication. As he felt the happy influence of it upon his own mind, he was anxious to make others participate of the same happiness. This seems to have been one of the principal objects he had in view. That pecuniary motives had no share in the publication, is evident from the preface, where he expressly says, "That no profit could accrue to him from it, but probably a considerable loss, as the number printed could not defray the expence of the impression." This circumstance he mentions, that the truth may appear what it is, "That a book was once written, with the real purpose of being useful."

In the course of this work, our author discovers a thorough knowledge of the opinions of the ancients, with respect to a Deity; shews the absurdity of those systems which many of them adopted; and, by a chain of cool and temperate reasoning, seldom to be met with in polemical writings, exposes the ignorance and folly of those Philosophers who endeavoured to draw aside mankind from

from a belief of the one only living and true God. It is Philosophy alone, become lunatic, which can produce Atheism; for so expressive are the Heavens of the glory of God, so legible are the impressions of his hand through the whole extent of nature, that, from the visible things which he has made, the invisible things of him, even his eternal power and Godhead, may be clearly discovered.

Whoever reads this valuable work, will find much entertainment as well as instruction. He will be led to esteem more highly the sacred scriptures, and be enabled to repel, with success, every dart thrown at them by the Atheist and Deist, in order to invalidate their divinity.

7. A Review of the Works of the Royal Society of London; containing animadversions on such of the papers as deserve particular observation. In eight parts: Under the several heads of Arts, Antiquities, Medicine, Miracles, Zoophytes, Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals.

This treatise animadverts upon no less than seventy-nine papers laid before, received, and printed in the transactions of the Royal Society.

The intention of publishing this Work was to expose the absurdity of the pieces which are selected from these Transactions, as well as their authors, and those who patronised them; and every one who reads it will have no hesitation to acknowledge, that our Author, while he fully evinces himself an entire master of all the subjects of which it is composed, has succeeded to his utmost wish. But, as many have taken it upon them to assert, that our Author was impelled to this publication from a piece of pique against the Royal Society, on account of their having refused to admit him a member, and as those unacquainted with the matter may be apt to believe these assertions: in vindication of the character of the deceased, and that the truth may be known, it is thought proper here to give his own account of the affair, which, as it stands uncontradicted, and, indeed, is altogether incapable of contradiction, is the more necessary to be laid before the public. The account alluded to, is the Preface to the Review, and delivered by our Author in the following words:

“ Scarce any treatise, of so little consequence to the world, as the nature of the subject renders this, has, perhaps,

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perhaps, ever been so much or so variously spoken of before its appearance. What it is, itself must show; what has been the occasion of the publication of it, its Author, in a manner, is called upon to declare.

“ An attachment to the studies, for the promoting of which the Royal Society was established, he owns has carried him often to their meetings, though the manner of treating them there would not suffer him to add himself to their number; and that the opportunities of experimenting have long brought a select set of the Members once a week to his house. The observations made at these meetings are somewhat too pompously recorded in their Transactions; and his name, with an addition, under which he had been used to be addressed, before he had the honour of a degree of Doctor of Physic, now stands in the list of the Members of the Body.

“ It is not wonderful from these circumstances, that his foreign correspondents supposed him a Member of the Society; nor is it very wonderful that he could not be pleased with being supposed a Member of a Body that he saw declining so fast in its reputation. He had been taxed with one of the errors of the Society, by a correspondent of the first rank in literature in France, and in his answer had said, *I have already set right the error you complain of; but you are to know, that I have the honour not to be a Member of the Royal Society of London.*

“ The letter in which this unlucky sentence stood, lay unfinished on the Author's table, when one of the Society, earlier than the rest, came in upon the accustomed visit. Before the Author came to him, he had read at least this part of it; and we are not to wonder, that he who could obtain intelligence in that manner, could also divulge it. *Hinc ille lachrymæ!* Hence all the commotions that have since disturbed this philosophic world.

“ After this piece of secret history, it will not be easy to persuade the world, though four times four hundred mouths have been long busied in attempting it, that the Author ever could be prevailed upon to have his name, as really his, upon the list. To give the appearance of a peculiar enmity to this Review of the Works of the Society, it has been very freely asserted, that he had put himself to the ballot for choice, and been rejected by a great majority:

majority. It is condescending almost too low, to answer an assertion that carries its own refutation with it, but the condescension is all the difficulty that attends the setting the characters of those who have said it, in a very fair light.

“ The elections into the Royal Society are in great form; a recommendation is drawn up in writing signed by several of the Members, who declare the person worthy of that great honour; this is hung up in the room of their meetings a quarter of a year, and at the end of that time it is sent to the ballot, whether the candidate shall be received. If it were true, that the Author of these Animadversions was ever so recommended, or so ballotted for, the paper must remain, and those at least who gave the negative Balls would remember that they did so. No such thing ever happened; nor will a Member of the Body, after this, probably ever venture to whisper that he thinks there did.

“ Though people’s intentions are not easily discovered, when there are no actions to declare them, it happens in this case that even intention might be proved, by evidence always to have been in this Author determinately and immoveably on the side of avoiding what these gentlemen suppose an honour; but it would be a mean triumph to add more infamy to characters too black already; nor is it necessary to go farther than conviction.

“ The Author’s own judgment has been very severely arraigned, for his disputing that of the Society; and there remained no method of having the cause determined, but the submitting it in this manner to the Public. If he is merry in some places, let it be considered, that the subjects are too ridiculous for serious criticism; if he is positive in others, let it not appear too assuming; he pretends to nothing but the knowing more than the Royal Society appears by its publications to know, and surely a man may do that, and yet be very ignorant!

“ That the work, however, might not be without its real use, an error is no where exposed without the establishing the truth in the place of it; and the Author has no wish in regard to it, but that the Society may, by means of it, become ashamed of what it has been,

and

and that the world may know he is not a Member of it, till it is an honour to a man to be so.

“ Among the Members of it, there are men great in all senses of the word, men esteemed in the highest degree by the Author of those Animadversions, and by whom he thinks it his greatest honour to be esteemed. The subject of complaint is, that a few busy and ignorant people thrust themselves into employment, while those who are able to do the Body credit, refuse to join their labours to those of such unworthy associates, or even to countenance with their appearance the meetings where such business is transacted. These see too clearly to suppose a censure of the Society, under its present management, an attack upon their separate characters; they agree with the Author in his opinions, and seem determined to make this work the basis of a reformation, that will set the Body they belong to above the reach of an attack of the same kind for the future. How much such a reformation is wanting will appear from the succeeding pages; how long it has been wanted, and how much the greatest men of other times have been of this Author's opinion about it, may appear from the following quotation, to which nothing need be added:

“ There is no study more becoming a rational creature, than that of Natural Philosophy; but as several of our modern Virtuofos manage it, their speculations do not so much tend to open and enlarge the mind, as to contract and fix it upon trifles.

“ This, in England, is, in a great measure, owing to the *worthy Elections* that are so frequently made in our Royal Society. They seem to be in a confederacy against men of polite genius, noble thought, and diffusive learning; and chuse into their assemblies such as have no pretence to wisdom, but want of wit; or to natural knowledge, but ignorance of every thing else. I have made observations on this matter so long, that when I meet with a young fellow that is an humble admirer of the sciences, but more dull than the rest of the company, I conclude him to be a Fellow of the Royal Society.” *Tatler*, No. 236.

It may appear strange, that so much notice should be taken of this work in particular; but the reader's amazement,

ment, on that head, will evanish, when he is informed, that, to this publication, more than to all the other performances of our Author, is Sir JOHN HILL, perhaps, indebted for the weak attacks made upon him, by such of that Society, as felt the force of its irony, and soundness of reasoning employed in it.

There remains still another reason for being thus particular. It has been asserted by one writer, who has given what he calls, *A short Account of the Life, Writings, and Genius of the late Sir JOHN HILL*, and which made its appearance in the magazines and news-papers soon after his death, "That he was introduced to the acquaintance of *Martin Folkes*, and *Henry Baker*, Esqrs. both of the *Royal Society*, the former the late President, and through them to the literary world, where he was received and entertained, on every occasion, with candour and warmth of friendship."

From this quotation, those unacquainted with the character of Sir JOHN, may be led to form opinions much to its prejudice, particularly on the score of gratitude; because it is a certain fact, that our Author has been more severe, in his *Animadversions*, upon the productions of Mr Baker, than upon any one of the numerous *Societarians*, whose pieces he exposes and confutes. We may therefore fairly conclude, that if Sir JOHN, as is alledged, originally lay under any obligations to Mr Baker, they were more than cancelled by that gentleman's after conduct to him; for we have nowhere learnt, that ingratitude had the smallest share in the composition of the character of Sir JOHN HILL.

But, with regard to Mr Folkes, we are left in no doubt. The *Animadversions* are dedicated to that Gentleman, as President of the Royal Society. This Dedication will fully explain the *favours* our Author received from him, and at the same time afford such additional reasons why these *Animadversions* were published, that we could not withhold it from those of our readers who have not had the pleasure of perusing the book itself. It is as follows:

"Sir, could I want inclination to inform the world of the great respect I have reason to mention your name to it with; yet you have so natural a right to the Pa-

tronage

tronage of these Animadversions, that it were at once unjust and ungrateful to rob you of the honour.

"It is to you alone that the world owes their having been written; the purport of the more considerable of them has been long since delivered to you in conversation; and if you had thought the Society deserved to escape the censure that must attend this method of laying them before the world, you might have prevented it, by making the necessary use of them in private.

"Nor is this, Sir, the only sense in which you have been the great instrument of their production; since it cannot but be acknowledged, that if any body, except your great self, had been in the high office you so worthily fill at present, the occasions of many of the more remarkable of them could not have been received by the Body, under whose countenance alone they claim their places in this work.

"The virtues of the Patron are usually the favourite theme of the Dedicator; nor are there wanting, Sir, in you, many, which for my own sake I ought to make the world acquainted with. The manner in which you represented me to a noble friend, while to myself you made me much more than I deserved; the ease with which you *excused* yourself of this; the unconcern with which you forgot you had *excused* yourself; and the solemnity with which, in the face of Almighty God, you *excused* yourself again; when we remember, that the whole was done within the compass of a day, these are surely virtues, that I, of all men, ought not to pass over in silence.

"Your manner of mentioning me in my absence, while politeness was out of countenance at your complaisance to me when present; and, finally, your representation of a letter, which your avowing your innocence had procured from me, and which might have been the means of that accommodation you were not ashamed to say you desired, are circumstances also that I must not pass over without their share in this eulogium: They are incidents that cannot but inform me, in the most sensible manner, of your *true* character; and that cannot but testify to the world, that you are as full of *Honour*, as of *Philosophy*; as worthy to be a *Friend*, as to be a *President of a Royal Society*."

Thus

Thus far the Dedication; and surely no one who reads it, together with the Preface, will entertain the idea, that our Author undertook this curious and instructive Work, from the mean and selfish motives to which those, ignorant of the real matter, have been led to ascribe them.

OCTAVO ET INFRA.

Under this Title, our Author published :

1. Hortus Kewensis, Sistens Herbas Exoticas, Indigenasque Rariores, in Area Botanica, Hortorum Augustissimæ Principissæ Cambriæ Dotissæ, apud Kew, in Comitatu Surreano, cultas; Methodo Florali nova dispositas. Figuris Æneis Viginti Illustrata.
2. Herbarium Britannicum, exhibens Plantas Britanniae Indigenas, secundum Methodum Floralem novam digestas. Cum Historia, Descriptione, Characteribus Specificis, Viribus, et Usis. Tabulis Æneis Illustratum, 2 vols.
3. Flora Britannica, cum fig.
4. Family Herbal.
5. Virtues of British Herbs, with their various Uses in Medicine.
6. Tracts Medical and Botanical, in four volumes. Each Tract was published separately, and might have been had either in that manner or altogether. Amongst them were the following: The Family Practice of Physic, with the Management of Herbs.—Management of the Gout—Old Man's Guide to Health—Power of Water Dock in the Scurvy—Virtues of Agrimony—Burdock—Valerian—Centaur—Sage—Polypody, &c. &c. Cautions in Fevers—in the Measles. Advice to Persons in the Use of Snuff and Tobacco, &c. &c.—Practice of Gardening—An account of the Mushroom Stone, &c.
7. Philosophical Essays, chiefly in Natural History, with Observations from the Microscope.
8. Fossils arranged according to their obvious characters, with their History and Description, under the articles of Form, Hardness, Weight, Surface, Colour, and Qualities; the Places of their Production; their Uses, and distinctive English and Classical Latin Names.
9. Theophrastus's

9. Theophrastus's History of Stones, in Greek, with an English Version and Notes, including the Modern History of the Gems described by that Author; and of many other of the Native Fossils; to which are added, two Letters, one on the Colours of the Sapphire and Turquoise; the other, upon the effects of different Menstruums upon Copper. Both tending to illustrate the Doctrine of the Gems being coloured by Metalline Particles. With a Greek Index of all the Words in Theophrastus. Also observations on the new Swedish Acid, and of the Stone from which it is obtained; and with an Idea of a natural and artificial Method of Fossils.

10. Two Pamphlets on the State Papers, and other matters respecting the Revolution in Sweden.

11. The Inspector, 2 vols. containing Essays on various Subjects. Dedicated to the Earl of Orrery. These Essays were originally published in one of the London daily Papers, in regular succession. They were justly admired when seen only in that detached manner; and when afterwards published as a work by themselves, were no less esteemed, having sold very rapidly. At the same time, we do by no means introduce this work, into the present Catalogue, as in any respect to be compared with others of a more laborious nature, and on which our Author necessarily behoved to bestow more than ordinary attention. Some of them, indeed, seemed to claim the attention of a whole life; nor would less have sufficed, perhaps, in any other hands. The *Inspector*, therefore, rather tended to afford some relaxation, in the midst of his deeper studies; nor was this the only work of the kind which he appropriated for that purpose; for while he regularly furnished one of these essays every day, he at the same time started the British Magazine, and supplied it likewise with the necessary materials. Amidst this variety of business, when much inquiry and great attention were necessary, little room, it may be supposed, was left for diversion. Sir JOHN HILL, however, was so exact an economist of time, that he scarcely ever missed a public amusement for many years; and this, as he somewhere observes, was of no small service to him, as, without indulging in these respects,

spects, he could not have undergone the fatigue and study inseparable from the execution of his vast designs.

It would be endless particularly to enumerate the other works of this great Man. Many of them were published without having his name affixed to them; others may have escaped our observation; and all, we will readily acknowledge, have received little honour from the present imperfect Sketch. It was not proposed they should. This was only meant as a Catalogue; but it is such a one as we presume few, either in this, in any preceding, or succeeding age, have been; or will be able to produce its equal. The whole of these valuable writings, with the copy right of them, are vested in the person of Lady Hill, whose property they became, as Executrix to her deceased husband.

Sir JOHN HILL was the son of a clergyman of the same name. He was bound apprentice to an Apothecary, as has already been mentioned; but soon, by his own merit, and great abilities, raised himself above that line of life.

The first honour he received was that of a Diploma as Doctor of Medicine. He was afterwards chosen a Member of the Imperial Academy, and one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the City and Liberties of Westminster. He was also particularly patronised by the countenance of various foreign Princes, from several of whom he received many rich and curious presents. But, the most distinguished honour which our Author received, was that which was conferred on him by that great admirer of Genius and Learning, the present King of Sweden. This Monarch is well known to possess both these qualifications in an eminent degree. He saw them likewise in the person of our Author, and was anxious to afford him proper proofs of that conviction.

In this view, his Majesty wrote a letter to our Author, with his own hand, acquainting him, that, as a testimony of his regard, he meant to invest him with the illustrious Order of VASA. It is conceived in such terms of friendship as nothing but the highest opinion of our Author's merits could dictate, and which could not fail of convincing the person to whom it was addressed, that, however much he might be respected in his own country,

country, to have so distinguishing a mark of favour bestowed upon him by a foreign Prince, was far superior to any honour he could receive at home. This letter, we are informed, is now in the possession of Lady Hill; and, we doubt not, will be long regarded by her Ladyship and family, as not the most insignificant legacy, among many others, which a most loving husband and indulgent parent, had the happiness to leave behind him.

Soon after the receipt of this letter, his Excellency Baron Nolcken, Ambassador from the Court of Sweden, had transmitted to him from his Majesty, the Ensigns of the Order, with commands to personate him, and to invest Sir JOHN HILL with it. This was accordingly done, with all the solemnities usual upon such occasions; and, though Sir JOHN did not enjoy it many years, we believe it is a *single* instance of any subject of Britain, now living, having had the honour of so distinguished a mark of favour being conferred upon him in his own country, at the express command of a foreign Monarch*.

Sir JOHN HILL was twice married: First to Miss Traversers, and afterwards to the Honourable Miss Jones, Sister of the present Lord Viscount Ranelagh of the Kingdom of Ireland, now Lady Hill. He died in November 1775, and was buried at Denham.

To attempt a Character of this great and universal Genius, would perhaps be as difficult a task as to comment, with propriety, on his many valuable Publications. That does not come within the scope of the present design; neither is it meant to wage war with the execrable race of Drug Doctors, whose interest it is to decry every thing which is not administered through the medium of their solemn and unintelligible mummeries.

* Since this Sketch was wrote, we observe, with pleasure, that Lord Macleod affords an exception to the above observation. His great military abilities were long known and esteemed by the King of Sweden. His Lordship was lately called home to exert them in defence of his native country. But his Swedish Majesty, ever attentive to reward and respect merits wherever it truly exists, was not, for that reason, to forget his Lordship's former services. No! as a proof of this, and to convince the world of his regard to that Nobleman, he has, since his arrival in Britain, been invested with the Swedish Order of the Sword.

For my part, I hasten to a more pleasing, as well as a more generous office—that of contributing my mite of gratitude to the memory of a gentleman, who (to adopt the language of a foreign Prince) hath not only made large additions to human knowledge, but who was, of all Europeans, either ancient or modern, the most skilled in those sciences in particular, on which depend restoration of health, elegant information; and, as it hath frequently proved, protraction of existence.

The dead are not susceptible of encomium, and the most animated voice of human praise cannot either gratify or soothe them. I shall not, therefore, be suspected of flattery.

What I have to say, indeed, proceeds from a pure source; it flows from gratitude. I am on the list of those who have been rescued from the jaws of death, by those Restoratives, which it was the labour of an ever active life, and vigorous understanding, to discover in, and extract from those various vegetable productions which the GOD of kindness provided as anodynes against human infirmity.

Since the decease of Sir JOHN HILL, several facts have been misrepresented, and several fables represented as facts. This is a tax which merit must ever be contented to pay to malice. Envy will always dip her dart in poison; and detraction prey upon names that fame hath destined to Posterity. On turning over some volumes of news-papers, I find he has been aspersed by those party, paltry sarcasms, which are for ever hovering over dignity, virtue, and eminence deceased.

The character of the Author of the Vegetable System, however, and of those multifarious Medicines, which resulted from a long, patient, painful, and reiterated attention to that System, is too tenderly impressed on the feelings of those who had personally the honour of his acquaintance. With such, a witticism is without the power to wound; and the memory of their learned associate, cheerful companion, and affectionate friend, is indelibly engraven in the securest register—even in the tablet of the heart.

But the most popular character can be known, intrinsically, but to few, in comparison of the numbers who know

know him only by printed description, or auricular intelligence. Such intelligence, however, and such description, is often unfaithful; and there is reason to believe, that Sir JOHN HILL hath not descended to the grave, without some of those consequent misapprehensions that are entailed upon men of genius, and persons situated in that painful pre-eminence which essentially separates the brilliant from the dull, and the worthy from the wicked. At any rate, those ardent honours have not been consecrated to his memory, which it seems to command.

He hath erected, it may be said, a lasting monument for himself. Immortality shall wreath her laurel of undying verdure upon the invaluable volumes he hath left behind him. This is admitted; but Sir JOHN HILL'S Character is not built solely on the indefatigable powers of his understanding—on his fortitude, which set the most stupendous obstacles at defiance, and which explored the very recesses of Nature—nor—on the versatile capacity of shifting his attention, without distraction or disarrangement, from one subject to another, and *that*, perhaps its direct contrary. No! His literary labours do not furnish the *brightest*, though many bright flowers, if he was disposed to weave a garland in honour of his character. To do this, we should turn from the lustre of his intellectual talents, to collect from his private virtues. Let us look at him in that walk of life, where the man of science is, alas, but too frequently found wanting. The view is too captivating to be hastily dismissed. At all moments, at all periods of health and decline, and in all the situations they naturally produce, nothing could exceed the diligent cheerfulness with which he applied to that toilsome, and almost incomprehensibly-difficult succession of efforts, which was necessary to such an undertaking as that of the Vegetable System;—after he had finished which, his assiduity was so far from relaxing, (as is usual with those who have long bent the mind and all the powers to one object) that he seemed to gather new fortitude to begin a second, the moment he had completed a first.

As a Botanical Writer, we only see Sir JOHN HILL in his theory. As a Philosopher and Physician (for he united

ed the characters) we observe him putting that admirable theory in practice. He did not start up as a visionary and audacious Empiric, broaching new-fangled doctrines and leap with self-assumed importance into a carriage that he might have, like the gentlemen of the Pill and Potion, a *prescriptive* right to kill or cure. He did not hazard the life of a fellow-creature, by way of experiment; nor did he *tamper and drug* a constitution as a trial of skill. His fame; his successes; and his fortunes which were the consequences of them, were gradual.

The great feature of his character was Philanthropy or a tender and perfect sense of that love which bound him to the species in general. We mark him, in the next place, by an affectionate assiduousness to serve, and cherish his friends in particular. System did not make him callous to the calls of charity; nor did Science prevent him from indulging his sympathy. Involved as he was in labours infinitely diversified, he had not merely a barren tear, but a bountiful healing hand, for distress in every form. He was never so immersed, either in business or books, as not to *make* leisure for either the cure or consolation of indigence or misfortune.

In a word, whatever Sir JOHN HILL may have added to vegetable or to medicinal knowledge, his heart did not possess talents more amiable, than those virtues which arose from his heart; and although he hath, perhaps, by the astonishing and constant sale of his Medicines (which are all formed on many years experience so that his practice was a splendid illustration of his precept) circulated the knowledge of his abilities to all parts of cultivated Europe, yet he was one of those rare characters who would bear approximation. He did not merely glitter at a distance, and die as a vapour at the approach; but some of the first men in this, and in foreign countries, can witness, that the more thoroughly he was known, and the closer your connexion with him the more would he entertain, and endear himself to more to your understanding, and to your heart.

The death of so great a man could not fail of affecting in an eminent degree, many individuals, and those concerned in the pursuit of literary and medicinal know-

ledge

ledge in particular. Had he been less attentive, however, the loss would have been still more severely felt. He was anxious that the world should not be deprived of the benefit of the many medicines he had invented, and therefore was at pains to instruct his Lady in their preparation. These, we are happy to find, she has not neglected; and, in her hands, there is no doubt, care will be taken to render them equally beneficial to the Public.

F I N I S

OF SIR JOHN HILL

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